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**SOFTWARE EVALUATION**

Boardmaker and Boardmaker Plus! software is a communication software. Boardmaker is used to create symbols with pictures and graphics in order to assist in communication for students with speech, language and learning disabilities. There are thousands of symbols and graphics to choose from to make your own communication board. The software also provides you with sets of communication boards and activities that are ready to use. Boardmaker Plus! now offers interactive activities for the students as well. Boardmaker is an easy way to add symbols to sentences so that the sentence is clearly understood by all learners. Boardmaker is widely used by Special Education teachers and Speech and Language Therapists. There are many accessories that you can buy to work alon with the software, such as DynaVox. This hardware can be used to students to communicate their thoughts. When the students presses on a symbol, there is a voice to express what the symbol is. There is also a desktop touch monitor that you can use with Boardmaker Plus! if the student cannot use the keypad. Boardmaker is extremely versatile and recommended by many Special Educators.

**TEACHER INTERVIEW**

When I talked to a teacher at Stock Preschool, she raved about Boardmaker. This is a Preschool that is mostly Special Education, but also has gifted and typically developing students. In her class of twenty in the morning, she has 10 in Special Education. Out of the 10 students, she has about 4 that have low verbal communication. She explains how she uses Boardmaker on a daily basis and very often throughout the day. She uses Boardmaker for the daily schedule, to tell stories, to explain centers and procedures, and she wears about 40 different symbols around her neck on a necklace for better communication with her students. This teacher and her partner absolutely love Boardmaker and expressed that they could not make it through the day without it. The love how easy it is use and how versatile it is.

**LESSON PLAN**

**SUBJECT**: Language Arts

**GRADE**: Preschool

**STANDARDS:** Learning Standard A-Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections. Benchmark: 1.A.EC a-Understand that pictures and symbols have meaning and that print carries a message.

**MATERIALS**: the Book “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” by Eric Carle, Velcro board, Boardmaker

**PREPARATION OF LESSON:** Use Boardmaker to make symbols and text of all the fruit in the book that the caterpillar eats. Laminate symbols, cut them out and put a piece of Velcro on the back of each symbol.

**LESSON**: Read the book “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” by Eric Carle during circle time to all the students. While you are reading the book, have an assistant use the Boardmaker symbols and Velcro them to the Velcro board to tell the story along with the book. Afterwards, have groups of students retell the story for you. Give them the options to act out the story in groups, use the symbols on the Velcro board, or draw the story on paper. The children that are not as verbal can choose to use the Velcro board or draw the story. They also get to see some children act the story out. This helps all students comprehend the story in all different learning styles.